



Development Plan



City of Dayton ¥ Department of Planning and Community Development ¥ 1999

Cooper Park Neighborhood Development Plan

I. Introduction and Overview

Cooper Park is the oldest public park in Dayton. It was donated to the citizens of Dayton in perpetuity by Daniel Cooper. In the early days of the City, the area surrounding the park had quite a few residents and was a thriving neighborhood in its own right. Following the development and construction of the Miami-Erie Canal in the 1820 s and 30 s the neighborhood began to evolve into a warehousing and manufacturing area and would continue to do so well into the early 20th century.

As the Dayton area began to spread out in the 1950 s and 60 s, residents first, and then manufacturing, moved to developing areas on the fringes of the community. Many handsome buildings in the Cooper Park area became vacant and underutilized. Some were demolished to make way for surface parking lots while others found new life with new uses. In the early 1980 s, a housing developer from Columbus, Ohio began building 34 townhouses across the street from the public library in response to the sale of the land from the City of Dayton. New ownership housing units were completed in downtown Dayton for the first time in more than 60 years. Since that time, more than 170 units of market rate rental housing have been developed at the edge of the River on Monument Avenue. The occupancy levels have remained quite high indicating an unmet market demand for additional housing units in the downtown area.



By the late 19th century, Cooper Park thrived along with industry located on the eastern edge of downtown.

The downtown Sears store has closed and many buildings remain vacant and underutilized as well as a large number of empty lots that are used for all day downtown parking in the Cooper Park Neighborhood. The Public Library considered other downtown locations but has decided to stay in their existing location and update the facility which will continue to anchor the neighborhood.

In part, as a result of continuing changes in the downtown and in the vicinity of the Cooper Park specifically, the current residents requested assistance to develop a plan for their neighborhood in the spring of 1996. This document is a result of the process that occurred because of that request.

II. Process

A process was initiated in the late summer of 1996 with representative residents of Cooper Place, the City of Dayton Planning Department and CityWide Development Corporation. It was intended that this process would result in the development of planning recommendations for the neighborhood and be coordinated with the CitiPlan planning process which was occurring simultaneously.

The recommendations of the Cooper Park effort have been integrated into the Downtown Component of the CitiPlan. This document represents details as deemed appropriate and necessary by the Cooper Park planning group.



In the mid 1980's, new ownership housing was introduced to the downtown.

III. Cooper Park Neighborhood Survey

A survey was circulated among the Cooper Place residents in August of 1996. There are a total of 34 units. There were 13 responses to the survey which is considered a very good percentage. Many of the responses were detailed and suggested significant thinking on behalf of the respondents. The following items were compiled in order by the number of times respondents gave similar answers.

Reason for Living at Cooper Place:

1. Central/Downtown location
2. Work downtown/convenient/walking
3. Library
4. Low maintenance of units
5. Diverse, professional community

Found out about Cooper Place by:

1. Saw it under construction or completed
2. Word of mouth/friends
3. Newspaper/real estate listings



The Public Library has represented long-term stability and vitality for Cooper Park.

Moved to Cooper Place from:

1. Suburbs - about half
2. City - about half

Cooper Park Neighborhood Strengths

1. Central location
2. Library
3. Convenient to work/walk
4. Amenities/entertainment/dining
5. Surrounding historical context
6. Affordability/well maintained
7. Security/sense of community
8. Bikeway/parks
9. Churches/hospitals
10. Convenient parking

Cooper Park Neighborhood Weaknesses

1. Homeless at Cooper Park
2. Lack of retail/amenities/grocery store
3. Condition of older historic buildings
4. Lack of sense of community
5. Lack of green space
6. Perception of not being safe
7. Not enough housing/isolation/surrounded by parking lots



Linking Cooper Park to Webster Station and the Riverfront project is a high priority of the Cooper Park Neighborhood.

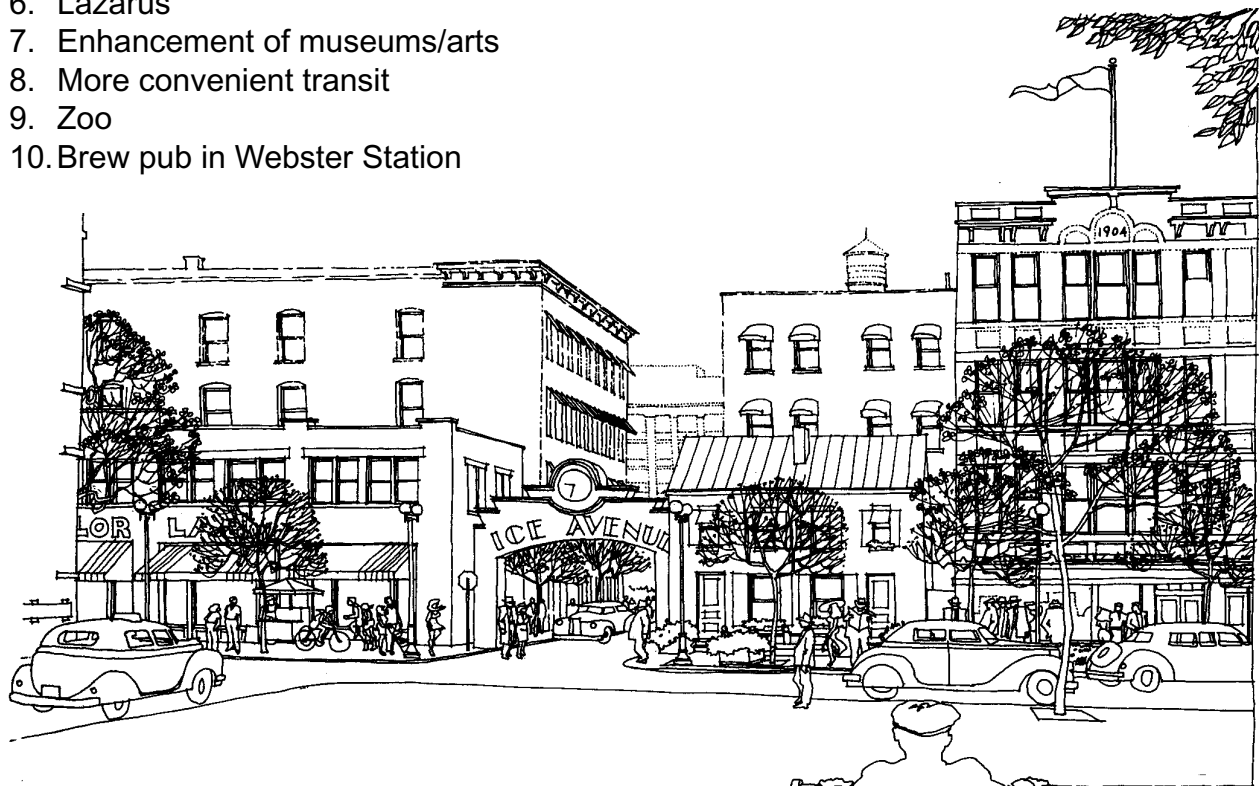
8. Poor maintenance of Cooper Park
9. Lack of a common vision for Cooper Park Neighborhood

Cooper Park Neighborhood Needs

1. More retail shopping and activities
2. More housing - lofts/new construction nearby
3. Managing the homeless situation
4. Enforcement of zoning and building regulations
5. Delivery problems and congestion on Ice Avenue and Harries Street
6. River
7. Improve library
8. Expanding Cooper Park/green space
9. Tax breaks for downtown residents
10. Maintenance of parking lots

Cooper Park Neighborhood Wants

1. Shopping
2. Reopen the Arcade
3. Do more with the river - marina/riverfront
4. Minor League Baseball
5. Parks/green space
6. Lazarus
7. Enhancement of museums/arts
8. More convenient transit
9. Zoo
10. Brew pub in Webster Station



The reuse of the Haas and Mitchell Leather Goods and Seitz & George buildings for mixed uses with housing is a high priority of the Cooper Park Plan.

IV. Scope and Setting

The geographical focus of the planning effort was centered around Cooper Park and radiated several blocks from that focal point. The effort would look beyond that setting in considering relationships to such areas as Oregon, the Neon District, Webster Station, the Riverfront District and the downtown core (refer to map 1).

V. Goals and Objectives

¥ Cooper Park Neighborhood Planning Goal

To develop and nurture the Cooper Park Neighborhood into a diverse, thriving downtown neighborhood as a place to live, work and play.

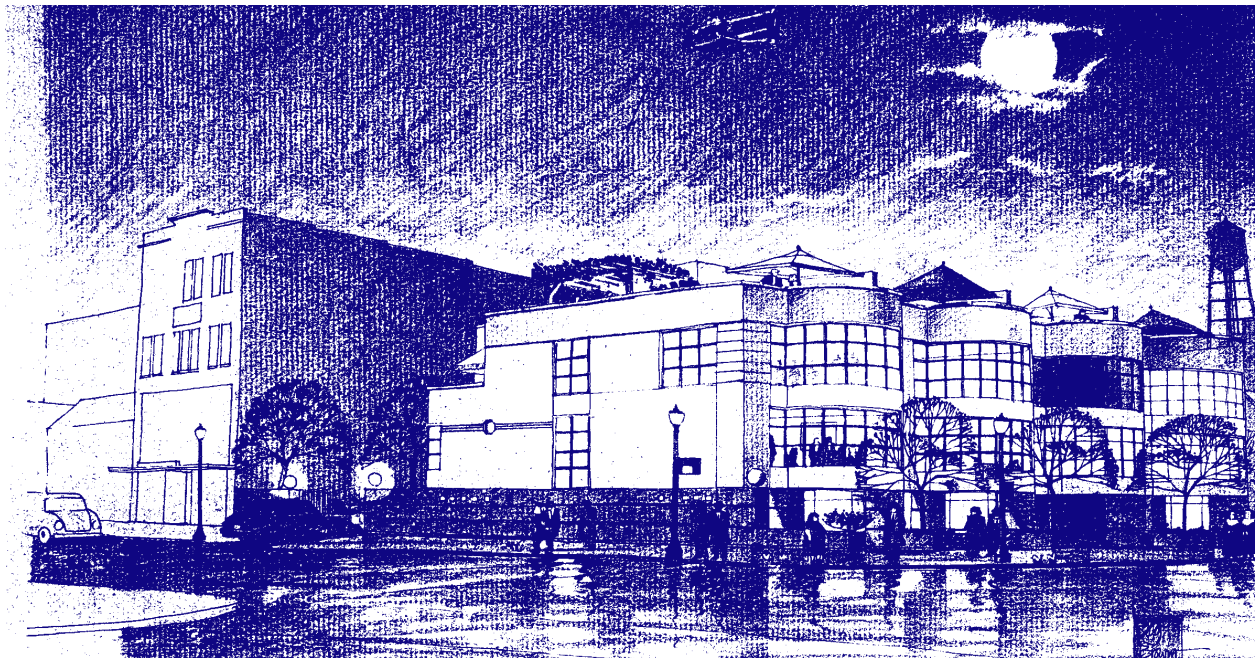
¥ Cooper Park Neighborhood Planning Objectives

Public Library

Is the major institution and anchor for the Cooper Park Neighborhood. The function and activities of the Library should be strengthened and enhanced. The Library should be expanded in its current location.

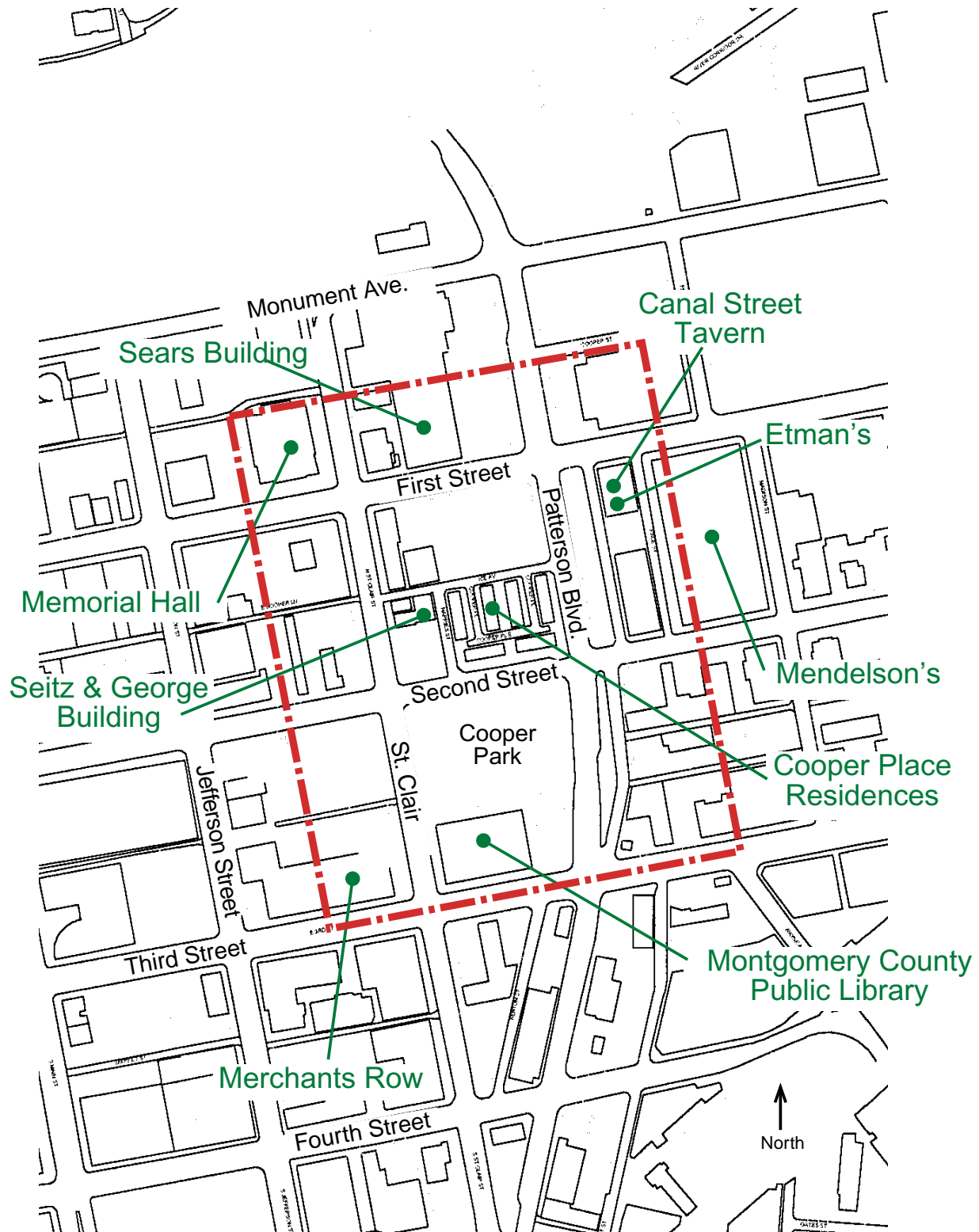
Housing

There should be much more housing developed in the Cooper Park Neighborhood. It should be a mix of new construction and rehabilitation. It should be a mix of owner and renter occupied.



Constructing new infill housing at the northeast corner of Second and St. Clair Streets will add vibrancy to Cooper Park.

Map 1 Cooper Park Neighborhood Planning Focus



Rehabilitation

Historic buildings help to create a sense of history and place. Encourage the rehabilitation of older and historic buildings in the Cooper Park Neighborhood for such uses as housing, business and amenities.

Amenities

Develop neighborhood support amenities such as a grocery, dry cleaners, laundromat, and video rental store where practical and possible.

¥ Related Issues

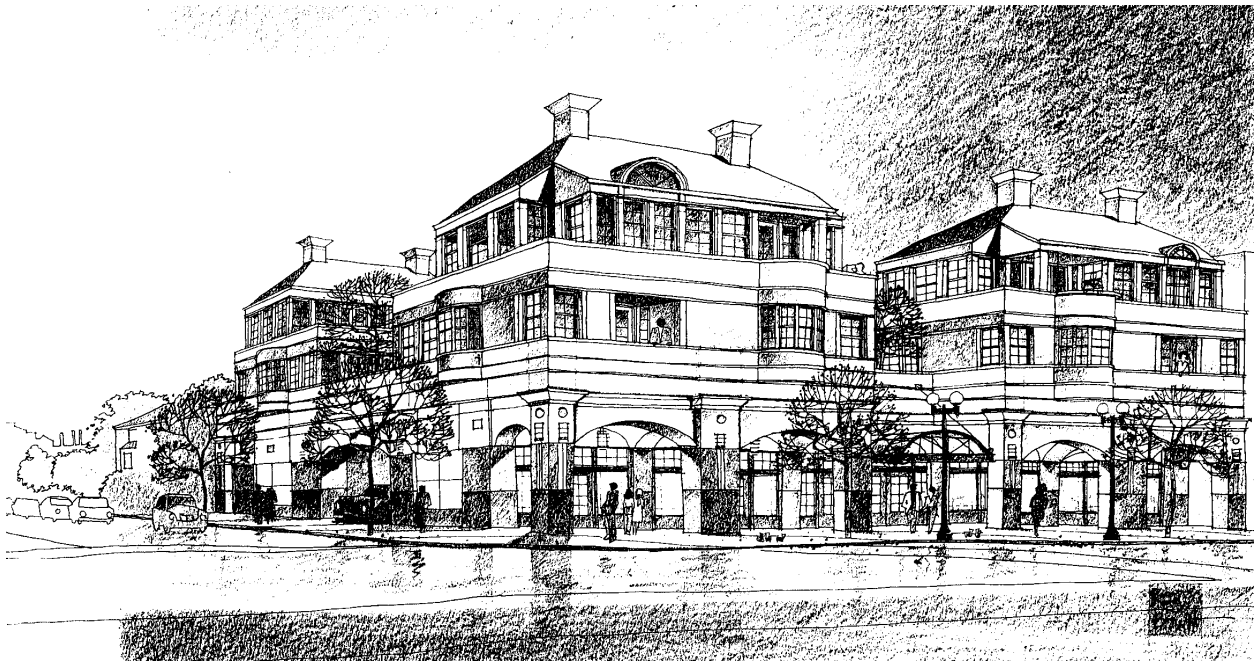
During the planning process, several issues relating to the existing and future viability of the Cooper Park Neighborhood surfaced and generated discussion. Some of those issues included:

Sears

The future reuse of the Sears Building was discussed. Several alternatives were discussed including reusing the building. Some of those alternatives included possible reuse for special destination retail uses that need convenient parking and could be developed to support neighborhood type functions. The potential to construct a multi-level parking garage on the site was discussed to be able to serve parking demands. Most of these issues will probably be resolved as part of the ongoing discussions concerning the Riverfront development.

Minor League Baseball

During the planning process, it was publicly revealed that several possible minor league baseball sites were being considered within the area of the Cooper Park Neighborhood. There were some general concerns about



Building new multi-story infill housing at the southwest corner of First Street and Patterson Boulevard will create a link and lively edge for the Riverfront and baseball projects.

the proposed facility being placed too close to Cooper Place. Discussions occurred concerning requiring integrating new housing projects with the facility. The park is scheduled to be completed during the spring of 2000.

Open Space Amenities

There were concerns discussed relative to enhancing and expanding connection with the system of river, parks and green spaces in the downtown area and Cooper Park. The proposed Canal Walk, which was created as part of the Riverfront Plan will fulfill this objective.

The Homeless

It was felt that continuing to meet the needs of the homeless in appropriate facilities was imperative to the future of developing more housing in the downtown.

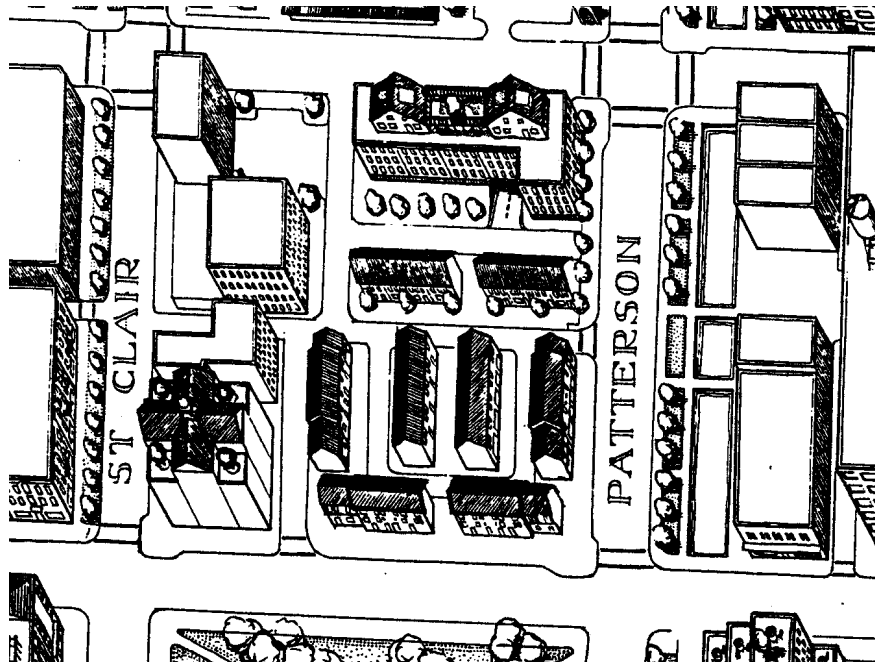
Overall Downtown

The planning participants discussed the importance of strengthening and increasing the number of overall attractions in the downtown.

VI. The Cooper Park Neighborhood Development Plan

The area surrounding Cooper Park has both vacant sites and existing buildings. Many of the older buildings are historic in nature and were constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Several of these buildings are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and, as such, could be eligible for historic investment tax credits.



Developing more activity adjacent to existing Cooper Place housing will help to support other downtown initiatives.

The development plan alternatives take into account opportunities for both renovation and new construction. New housing opportunities can be created in multi-story buildings and additional townhouses.

In addition, the plan considers options and locations for multi-story parking garages to serve existing and future parking demands for the area. Constructing multi-story parking garages is a key to the eventual development of currently vacant sites. Map 2 represents the development plan for the Cooper Park Neighborhood. The Plan considers the relationships to the Riverfront and baseball projects.

The Plan also identifies potential renovation and new construction projects located on the block north of Cooper Park as high priority. The completion of projects on this block could begin to create a critical mass for further mixed use development in this quadrant of downtown.

VII. Implementation

The Cooper Park Neighborhood Development Plan is intended to provide a policy framework for future changes in the area. It is important to ensure that future phases of mixed use housing development in this area be considered in the implementation of the CitiPlan 2020. In particular, as the minor league baseball facility is constructed along with the first phase of the Riverfront, it is important to consider how the development of Cooper Park will create added vitality.

In addition, it is expected that the Cooper Place Homeowners Association and the Downtown Priority Board will continue to function as a major advocate for actual implementation of additional market-rate housing units either in renovated buildings or as part of new construction.

Map 2 Cooper Park Neighborhood Development Plan and Opportunities

